

From the Office of State Senator Troy Fraser

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Senator Fraser Statement on 82nd Legislative Session

"The 82nd Legislative Session was a long and difficult one. We faced a great challenge in balancing our state's two-year budget.

"Texas has been experiencing tremendous growth because of the number of people moving here to take advantage of our economy. That growth put a strain on our services before we began to realize any revenue gains from the additional people in our state.

"With great challenges come hard solutions. The Texas Legislature was able to cut state spending by nearly \$15 billion, balance the budget without raising taxes and save enough money in the Rainy Day Fund to balance the budget in the future. We tightened our belts and prioritized our spending based on available revenue.

"The Texas Legislature increased state funding for public schools by almost \$4 billion. While we had to make some adjustments to our funding formulas, I believe our efforts should deter efforts to raise local school property taxes and keep good teachers in the classroom. We gave locally elected school boards more tools to better manage their own budgets and personnel issues.

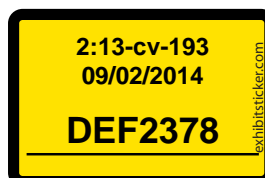
"On a personal note, after three sessions, I was finally able to enact a strong Photo Voter ID law that will protect the public's confidence in elections by deterring and detecting voter fraud. The new law I authored is a very simple concept. I just ask that every voter verify that "you are who you say you are" before casting a vote. It was an honor to have played a role in passing this landmark legislation.

"Even in a tough budget session, I was part of team that helped to enact landmark legislation that will continue to make our state the leader in economic growth and job creation. We enacted a "Loser Pays" tort reform law to reduce frivolous lawsuits and a free market health care law to improve health care outcomes, while removing regulatory barriers and reducing costs.

"As Chairman of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources, I was also able to pass historic legislation that clarifies that landowners own the groundwater below their property. The law reaffirms that landowners are entitled to drill for and produce the groundwater below the surface while still allowing local groundwater conservation districts the ability to manage groundwater. I feel very strongly that the right to produce groundwater from beneath your property is one of the most basic of all property rights.

"I also enacted legislation that requires the disclosure of the composition of hydraulic fracturing fluids used in hydraulic fracturing treatments. Some groups have asserted that the process of hydraulic fracturing to extract natural gas might pose a threat to Texas water supplies. My belief is that in order to know how to protect the public, we must have enough information to put the correct safeguards in place. This bill helps us to achieve that information.

"Overall, I was pleased with the session, particularly in my new role as Chairman of the Senate Committee



on Natural Resources. I committed last August to ensuring the federal government recognizes that Texas has made great strides in protecting all of our natural resources.

"During the interim, I will continue to work to slow down the federal government's attempted takeover of our regulatory policies. Texans know best how to successfully balance the dual interests of a strong economy and a clean environment. We have and can continue to make positive changes without over burdening our residents and businesses financially."

Senator Fraser represents a 21-county region in the geographic center of the state. He is the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources. He also sits on the following standing Senate Committees: Economic Development, Nominations, State Affairs, and International Relations and Trade

